

NSRE

**U.S.D.A. Forest Service &
N.O.A.A.**

SUMMARY REPORT #5 FROM THE:

**NATIONAL SURVEY ON RECREATION
AND THE ENVIRONMENT (NSRE)
(Versions 2, 4 & 6 with Sample Frequencies
and Weighted Population Estimates)**

**USES AND VALUES OF WILDLIFE
AND WILDERNESS IN THE UNITED STATES**

INTRODUCTION

This summary is the sixth in a series that provides sample frequencies and weighted population estimates from the 1999-2000 National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (*NSRE*). The *NSRE*, in general, was conducted to discover and describe: (1) participation by Americans in outdoor recreation activities, (2) opinions concerning management of both public and private forests and grasslands, (3) the importance and value of our natural environment, (3) uses and values of wildlife and wilderness, (4) people's lifestyles, and (5) recreational trips people take away from home. The *NSRE* data will be used by a variety of public and private organizations for both management and research purposes.

Version's one to five had a total target sample of 22,700 Americans above the age of 16. The average length of interviews for these survey's was 17 minutes. Data was collected from July 1999 through October 2000. A total of 22, 847 useable interviews were completed.

This summary, specifically, provides some sample frequencies and weighted estimates from versions two, four and six of the *NSRE* regarding American's beliefs and opinions concerning the uses and values of wildlife and wilderness in the United States. Data from just these versions of the *NSRE* were used because the wildlife and wilderness questions have only been included in these versions to date. Therefore the frequencies and percentages presented in this summary are based upon a range of 5-15,500 completed interviews.

Data from previous versions of the *NSRE* were examined for differences in demographic profiles between those surveyed and the overall population of the country. Differences were found to warrant weighting the data. The weighting strategy used a combination of multi-variate and multiplicative weights accounting for age, race, sex, education, and urban/rural differences. This weighting adjustment assures better estimates of recreation participation and trends across the general population. Subsequently, the population estimates provided in this report are from weighted sample frequencies and percentages. Furthermore, the population estimates are based upon the noninstitutionalized civilian population. Estimates of the noninstitutionalized civilian population (207.3 million) differ from the civilian population estimates (212.4 million) in that they exclude persons residing in institutions, such as nursing homes, prisons, mental hospitals or correctional facilities. People residing in such institutions are not part of the *NSRE*'s telephone sample, hence they are not contacted for interviews or used in the generation of population estimates.

Another source of bias comes from language barriers and the exclusion of non-English speaking US residents. According to the 1990 Census, 10.3% of the U.S. population is Hispanic. For the non- English speaking segment of the Hispanic population, the *NSRE* is being conducted in Spanish. The most difficult part of this process is getting the translation generic enough for overall comprehension by all the various Hispanic dialects. Please note that other non-English speaking U.S. residents are excluded from the *NSRE* survey. The complexity of translation and interviewing process make it cost prohibitive to conduct multi-lingual interviews.

AMERICAN'S USES AND VALUES OF WILDLIFE AND WILDERNESS

NSRE Summary (Versions 2, 4 & 6)

(With Sample Frequencies and Weighted Population Estimates)

The emphasis of this summary is on the beliefs and opinions of a sample of American's regarding the uses and values of wildlife and wilderness in the United States. Versions two, four and six of the **NSRE** contained several questions pertaining to wildlife and wilderness issues. In this summary, weighted sample frequencies and percentages for each wildlife and wilderness question incorporated in the **NSRE** to date are provided. (*Please note population percentages and numbers in all tables were generated from weighted data, and rounded to the nearest decimal point).

NSRE Survey

Uses and Values of Wildlife and Wilderness

The Wilderness Act of 1964 allows Congress to preserve certain federal lands in their wild condition. These lands cannot be used for purposes such as timber harvesting, developing ski resorts, or highways. To date, the Congress has added 625 areas to this National Wilderness Preservation System to protect wildlife, scenery, water, and recreation opportunities, and to keep these areas wild and natural.

WILD279 Were you aware that the Congress established this National Wilderness Preservation System?

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>*Percent</u>	<u>*Number in Millions</u>
1. Yes	5051	48.3	100.1
2. No	5286	50.5	104.7
3. Don't know	121	1.2	2.5

WILD282 Do you think the amount of land the Congress has designated as wilderness is not enough, about the right amount, or too much.

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>*Percent</u>	<u>*Number in Millions</u>
1. Not enough	7683	49.5	102.6
2. About right	4618	29.7	61.6
3. Too much	929	6.0	12.4
4. Don't know	2302	14.8	30.7

WILD282_1

If there are others in your household, Do you think they feel that the amount of land designated as wilderness is not enough, about the right amount, or too much.

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>*Percent</u>	<u>*Number in Millions</u>
1. Not enough	1823	35.0	72.6
2. About right	1288	24.8	51.4
3. Too much	304	5.9	12.2
4. No one else in household	826	15.9	32.9
5. Don't know	954	18.4	38.2

WILD282_2

How about your friends, would you guess that they would say the amount of land designated as wilderness is not enough, about the right amount, or too much.

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>*Percent</u>	<u>*Number in Millions</u>
1. Not enough	1888	36.4	75.5
2. About right	1552	29.9	62.0
3. Too much	376	7.3	15.1
4. Don't know	1367	26.4	54.7

WILD282_3

If you work outside the home, would you guess your coworkers feel the amount of land designated as wilderness is not enough, about the right amount, or too much.

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>*Percent</u>	<u>*Number in Millions</u>
1. Not enough	1400	27.0	56.0
2. About right	1280	24.7	51.2
3. Too much	326	6.3	13.1
4. No coworkers	273	5.3	11.0
5. Retired/don't work	558	10.8	22.4
4. Don't know	1346	25.9	53.6

WILD282_4

Do you feel that the federal government is not involved enough, is involved about the right amount, or is involved too much in protecting the environment?

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>*Percent</u>	<u>*Number in Millions</u>
1. Not enough	2440	47.1	97.6
2. About right	1616	31.2	64.7
3. Too much	732	14.1	29.2
4. Don't know	393	7.6	15.8

WILD280f

How do you feel about designating more of the federal lands in your state as wilderness? Would you say you strongly favor, somewhat favor, neither favor nor oppose, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose this idea?

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>*Percent</u>	<u>*Number in Millions</u>
1. Strongly favor	2043	39.3	81.4
2. Somewhat favor	1462	28.1	58.3
3. Neither	700	13.5	28.0
4. Somewhat oppose	410	7.9	16.4
5. Strongly oppose	334	6.4	13.2
6. Don't know	252	4.8	10.0

WILD280c

Do you plan to visit a wilderness area within the next year?

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>*Percent</u>	<u>*Number in Millions</u>
1. Yes	3607	69.0	143.0
2. No	1246	23.8	49.3
3. Don't know	373	7.2	14.9

WILD280d Even if you do not plan on visiting a wilderness area within the next year,
Would you want to visit one sometime in the future?

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>*Percent</u>	<u>*Number in Millions</u>
1. Yes	1211	74.9	155.3
2. No	306	18.9	39.2
3. Don't know	99	6.2	12.8

Wild295a Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements about wilderness.

I enjoy reading about and viewing pictures, videos, TV shows and movies featuring wilderness areas.

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>*Percent</u>	<u>*Number in Millions</u>
1. Strongly agree	6170	59.6	123.6
2. Somewhat agree	3158	30.5	63.2
3. Neither	338	3.3	6.8
4. Somewhat disagree	345	3.3	6.8
5. Strongly disagree	194	1.9	3.9
6. Don't know	147	1.4	2.9

Wild295b I enjoy knowing that other people are currently able to visit wilderness.

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>*Percent</u>	<u>*Number in Millions</u>
1. Strongly agree	7352	71.0	147.2
2. Somewhat agree	2377	22.9	47.5
3. Neither	213	2.1	4.4
4. Somewhat disagree	151	1.5	3.1
5. Strongly disagree	98	1.0	2.0
6. Don't know	155	1.5	3.1

Wild295c I enjoy knowing that future generations will be able to visit and experience

wilderness areas.

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>*Percent</u>	<u>*Number in Millions</u>
1. Strongly agree	8721	84.2	174.6
2. Somewhat agree	1312	12.7	26.3
3. Neither	65	0.6	1.2
4. Somewhat disagree	79	0.8	1.7
5. Strongly disagree	62	0.6	1.2
6. Don't know	112	1.1	2.3

Wild295d Wilderness areas are important to protect because they contribute to better local, national, and global air and water quality.

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>*Percent</u>	<u>*Number in Millions</u>
1. Strongly agree	8264	79.8	165.4
2. Somewhat agree	1469	14.2	29.4
3. Neither	144	1.4	2.9
4. Somewhat disagree	135	1.3	2.7
5. Strongly disagree	122	1.2	2.5
6. Don't know	221	2.1	4.4

Wild295e Wilderness areas are important because they help to preserve plant and animal species that could have important scientific or human health value, such as sources of new medicines.

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>*Percent</u>	<u>*Number in Millions</u>
1. Strongly agree	8041	77.7	161.1
2. Somewhat agree	1707	16.5	34.2
3. Neither	139	1.4	2.9
4. Somewhat disagree	145	1.4	2.9
5. Strongly disagree	129	1.2	2.5
6. Don't know	189	1.8	3.7

Wild295f

I support protecting wilderness areas just so they will always exist in their natural condition, even if no one were to ever visit or otherwise benefit from them.

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>*Percent</u>	<u>*Number in Millions</u>
1. Strongly agree	7040	68.0	141.0
2. Somewhat agree	2206	21.3	44.2
3. Neither	227	2.2	4.6
4. Somewhat disagree	379	3.7	7.7
5. Strongly disagree	312	3.0	6.2
6. Don't know	186	1.8	3.7

Wild295g

I believe the trees, wildlife, free flowing water, rock formations, and meadows that wilderness protects have value themselves whether or not humans benefit from them.

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>*Percent</u>	<u>*Number in Millions</u>
1. Strongly agree	7558	73.0	151.3
2. Somewhat agree	2103	20.3	42.1
3. Neither	157	1.5	3.1
4. Somewhat disagree	201	1.9	3.9
5. Strongly disagree	154	1.5	3.1
6. Don't know	182	1.8	3.7